

***Cynometra webberi***

Caesalpinaceae (Fabaceae)

**Indigenous**

**COMMON NAMES:** **Giriama:** Mudodoma, Mfunda; **Sanya:** Sakucha; **Swahili:** Mfunda.

**DESCRIPTION:** An evergreen shrub or tree to 12 m, **occasionally buttressed**. **BARK:** Smooth, light grey. **LEAVES:** Compound with up to 8 **opposite and slightly asymmetric leaflets**. Leaflets small, to 3 cm x 1.8 cm wide, **tip usually rounded**. **FLOWERS:** Small, white, in clusters, each with 4 sepals and 5 petals. **FRUIT:** A **woody, flat pod** to 6 cm x 3.3 cm, **with a small beak**.

**ECOLOGY:** Found only in Kenya and Tanzania in coastal *Brachystegia* woodland and riverine forest. Found in both white and red sandy soil, 0–300 m. Agroclimatic Zones II–III. Flowers in September at the coast.

**USES:** Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, beehives, utensils (drums, pestles), bee forage, shade.

**PROPAGATION:** Seedlings, wildings.

**SEED:** Seeds profusely and seed germinate easily.

**MANAGEMENT:** Prune lower branches as necessary.

**REMARKS:** The wood is hard and dense. Monkeys eat the young fruit. Hollow parts of the trunk store water for birds. A preferred tree for owls, squirrels and snakes. *C. lukei* (**Malakote:** Mupakata; **Pokomo:** Mpakata) is found in riverine forest in Tana River. It is used for furniture and canoes. According to Beentje (1994) its status is vulnerable. *C. suaheliensis* (**Swahili:** Mfunda) is a good timber species in coastal bushland and forest. This species and *C. webberi* are occasionally the dominant species in parts of the dry evergreen coastal forests such as Arabuko-Sokoke.

**FURTHER READING:** Beentje, 1994.

